

Freedom

Vol. XLI.—No. 439.

JANUARY, 1927.

MONTHLY: TWO PENCE.

NOTES.

Peace in Industry.

The New Year brought a flood of speeches and messages from public men on the subject of peace in industry, but very few of them gave an inkling as to how it was to come about. In replying to the New Year's message from the Lord Mayor of London, the King expressed his "unswerving faith in the British character" and a belief that, "with united efforts and a spirit of mutual confidence and goodwill in our widespread industries, we shall see a gradual but sure restoration of the trade and commerce of our beloved country." But when we look closely at all these pious wishes we see no signs that any members of the ruling and aristocratic class are willing to surrender the special privileges which hinder the growth of a spirit of "mutual confidence and goodwill." The land monopolists keep their grip on the soil of "our beloved country," which has resulted in a decrease since 1871 of 3,500,000 acres producing crops of various kinds, and an increase of 1,500,000 acres for deer forests. That is hardly likely to breed confidence and good-will between the privileged class and the workman who has been unemployed for years. No; we want something more tangible than good wishes. Our industries would soon be busy again if they were to cater to the needs of the community rather than to the profit-seeking of a few. Since the miners were driven back to work many of their most active comrades have been refused work, and those at work have been subject to all the petty annoyances and insults with which a conqueror harasses a defeated foe. The men imprisoned under the Emergency Powers Act have yet to discover any signs of goodwill in the attitude of the powers that be, and that "Locarno spirit" shown to the Germans is sadly lacking where the men behind the bars are concerned. If there is to be mutual confidence and goodwill between the people of this country it must be on a basis of equality. "The rich will do everything for the poor but get off their backs," said Tolstoy. When we find they have got off our backs, New Year greetings will then be something more than pious platitudes.

John Bull in the China Shop.

In the first days of this month a clash between the British and Cantonese at Hankow seemed inevitable, but was avoided by the good sense of those on the spot. The British Memorandum on the situation, urging the Powers to recognise facts and drop all talk of controlling China, has met with a frigid response, if not actual hostility; but we are not surprised, as all of them are playing for their own hand, and are not likely to help Britain in a situation which brings profit to themselves. The trade boycott has hit John Bull in his pocket, and as he has found out that an awakened China can no longer be bullied and controlled, he is making a virtue of necessity when he holds out the hand of friendship, whilst still keeping troops and warships in readiness if their use would bring any greater security to his commerce. Now that the Chinese have arms and know how to use them, John Bull is averse to any attempt "to impose control upon an unwilling China." But where he has the upper hand, as in Egypt and India, those unwilling nations feel the full effect of his oppressive control. The Labour Party has issued a manifesto on China in which they claim that in their changed attitude to China the British Government are carrying out the policy advocated by the Labour Party at Margate last October. A nice little pat on the back for themselves. But they seem to be rather humorous in their proposals. For instance, they suggest "an absolute and effective prohibition of the import of arms into China." Considering that the change in attitude to China was brought about almost entirely by the knowledge that the Chinese would shoot if they were attacked, it almost looks as though the Labour Party want to disarm the Chinese and leave them again at the mercy of their opponents, who are armed to the teeth.

Rabindranath Tagore and Fascism.

There are many people in this country who would like to introduce Fascism here, the *Morning Post* crowd, for example, though many other papers occasionally print articles praising Mussolini and all his works. The Italian Dictator has his propagandists in every country, who boast Fascism and drag in all sorts of people as sympathisers. Last summer Mussolini sent a gift of valuable books to Rabindranath Tagore and invited him to visit Italy. The poet was charmed with the present he had received, and went to Rome to see Mussolini. Having heard of some of the evils of Fascism, he was rather reserved in his comments; but the Fascist Press said he was bountiful in his expressions of surprise at the great change for the better in Italy. But it seems it was all lies. He wrote a letter, published in the *Manchester Guardian* last August, in which he said he had not been able to see things for himself. As he wrote sarcastically: "Official vehicles, though comfortable, move only along a chalked path of programme too restricted to lead to any places of significance, or persons of daring individuality, providing the visitors with specially selected morsels of experience." Like Labour delegations to Russia. Everyone he met praised Fascism and said it had saved the country from ruin. But the poet has learned better now, and the atrocities and the suppression of all freedom of expression, in his opinion, do not compensate for material aggrandisement. In an interview in Zurich with Mrs. Salvadori, whose husband and son were brutally maltreated by the Italian Fascisti, and who told him that he had unintentionally helped to support Fascism, he said he had been misrepresented. Had he known of the dark deeds done in Italy he would not have come to the country, but he fervently hoped that this great period of pain through which the Italian people are passing "will not coerce them into accepting an ambition for fatness of prosperity in place of spiritual greatness."

Creative Education.

We always enjoy reading the reports of the conferences of educationists which take place during the first week of each New Year. The authoritarians, always in the majority, seek to mould the children in their care according to the stereotyped standard; while the libertarian minority seek to bring out the varied faculties of children. They wish to experiment and see what possibilities there are in the young life of the world. Class instincts also enter into the calculations of the authoritarians, who think the children of the workers are incapable of profiting by an education usually reserved, for financial reasons, for the children of the well-to-do. Mr. Whitehouse, the well-known Warden of Bembridge School, in an address on "Creative Education" to members of the Private Schools Association, said: "In any alteration of our educational system we did not want to make more rigid and more permanent the present class system in education, but to realise that all branches of education needed reform. We required a more experimental spirit in all branches of education. . . . What we ought to aim at is to regard the elementary education as suitable for children up to a certain age, and to make it as good and as creative as possible, and to regard all secondary education as suitable to children, not of a social class, but of a certain age, to make it very varied and very creative, and to introduce this wider curriculum into all schools." Unfortunately, many parents are not able to keep their children at school long enough for them to take advantage of a secondary education. As soon as they reach 14 years of age they are sent out into the world to earn their daily bread, and Mr. Whitehouse pointed out the "terrible sacrifice we are making of the best assets of the nation in allowing these children to be prematurely sacrificed in the industrial life of the country." Educational equality, however, will not come while we have economic inequality; but in calling attention to this matter Mr. Whitehouse will have the support of all those who regard children as worthy of the best education possible, irrespective of the financial standing of their parents.

"Freedom's" Fortieth Anniversary.

FREEDOM certainly has a wonderful history behind it—a history of storm and stress, strife and struggle. However, it held its banner of light and liberty aloft steadily and tenaciously. Many a time it looked as if lack of funds was about to force it to go under for good. But again and again it manifested its strength, showing that the heroic stubbornness of our English comrades was not to be downed. In its terrific struggle for existence it somehow managed to survive, in spite of all difficulties and impediments.

I have been following its course for the last thirty-five years. Whenever a copy arrived it always acted upon me like a ray of sunshine in a gloomy, dark world.

In 1900 I had the extreme pleasure, as a delegate from the U.S.A. to the Anarchist Congress in Paris, to meet one of FREEDOM's editors, Alfred Marsh. Peter Kropotkin was also expected, but the French Government saw to it that he should not get a chance to desecrate the sacred soil of France by his unholy presence.

That Congress, by the way, reminded me a great deal of Nihilist gatherings in the Dark Russia of my younger days. It seemed to me extremely ridiculous for the powerful French Government to go to all this trouble because of a handful of Anarchists. I remember when Comrade Tversky and myself were about to enter the narrow street where our sessions were to be held, we found a squadron of police in full siege. A number of Anarchists who tried to get into the hall were arrested. Fortunately, Tversky and I turned abruptly around the minute we saw the gendarmes. The sessions were held, however, in a private house of a famous Paris physician, the last session being held in the woods on the outskirts of Paris.

In 1878, Germany made a law against the Social-Democrats which lasted twelve years. Since then the various countries are considering the Social-Democrats perfectly all right. Now it is the Communists and the Anarchists who are a menace to society, and must be placed outside the law, the same as heretics, blasphemers, and religious nonconformists who were jailed or burnt at the stake a couple of centuries back. Society, it seems, must always have its scapegoat. We happen to be the scapegoat to-day.

It is really surprising that FREEDOM managed to keep afloat somehow, in spite of all the obstacles, privations and persecutions. The Anglo-Saxon countries afford extremely barren soil for our ideas. The ultra-conservative, slow-thinking, unemotional John Bull is the incarnation of stand-pattism and stolidity.

I asked of a British comrade some years ago, "Why is it that we see so few articles in FREEDOM signed?" He said: "Because there are too many foreign contributors, and the Englishman is extremely prejudiced against everything foreign."

FREEDOM had the good fortune of having as collaborators almost all of our devoted and learned Anarchists of the past two generations, such men as Peter Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus, W. Tcherkesoff, Max Nettlau, Enrico Malatesta, Nieuwenhuis, Cornelissen, John Turner, William Morris, Louise Michel, and a host of others.

Among its other contributors, I remember Comrades Marsh, Harry Kelly, Frank Kitz, Owen, and Keell, the last two still at the helm, holding on as if for dear life through all these years of black reaction and persecution.

Were it not for the few self-sacrificing pioneers who stood at the helm of FREEDOM and the Anarchist movement in England in general, there would have been by this time no sign of Anarchist life there. FREEDOM's attitude toward the War and the Russian Revolution was certainly a most logical and courageous one. The martyrdom in the prisons and concentration camps of comrades Rudolf and Milly Rocker, S. Linder, Alex. Shapiro, Keell, and a great number of others during the War, has only served to strengthen our convictions that government is a curse under all circumstances and conditions.

They tell us Anarchy spells chaos. The last War instituted by the Governments and law-abiding citizens was the result of perfect order, was it not? If anything, this terrible catastrophe should be proof to all intelligent minds that it is government and not the absence of government that is really the cause of disorder, bloodshed, and chaos.

Instead, we see our ideals scorned and laughed at on all sides. More than ever, we are the Pariachs of modern times all over the world; the dreamers, visionaries, and Utopians, at best; but often thought of as the villains in the drama of modern society.

Our own ranks have suffered considerably even in the Latin countries, where our movement prior to the War has been intense and widespread. Many of our staunch comrades have become apathetic and indifferent, some even turning their back upon the cause that was part and parcel of their very life.

But shall we despair? Have the Mussolini's, De Riveras, Poincarés, and Zinoviews come to stay for ever and anon? Shall hypocrisy, militarism, Big Business, and black reaction continue their Satanic reign *in perpetuum*? Is it true what we hear said around us, that there will always be war among the nations? That war is born with us, the same as greed, cupidity, selfishness, and hatred? Will things always remain as they are? Is it an axiom that one can never go against the current? That all notions of the millennium are vain?

Unthinkable! Cannibalism had its day. So had slavery that followed it. So had feudalism and chattel slavery. So will wage slavery inevitably come to an end, together with all government and force of man over man.

May our staunch little champion FREEDOM live to see the glorious day of Liberty, Equality, and Happiness for all.

MICHAEL A. COHN.

Patience and Postage Stamps.

My old friend Bolton Hall used to say, "If you want to get your articles accepted in the magazines, you will have to practise patience and postage stamps." I do not know whether that would have helped me to a literary career, but it certainly helped me to come to Canada.

When the first suggestion of our comrade Rudolf Rocker's tour through Canada was made, it occurred to me that perhaps I too could try Canada. After I got to England, and especially after Rocker had reached Canada, the idea of a tour in this part of the world began to take form, and interested a number of comrades who assured me that Canada may be tried. However, in August the plan again looked dubious, the means to carry out the venture further away than ever. It was then that I remembered the good advice of my friend Bolton Hall. I began to use many postage stamps and increased my patience, both of which were not easy to maintain. In the end they bore fruit. A few devoted comrades came to the rescue, and on October 7 I embarked at Cherbourg for the "promised land."

The journey across the ocean might have been most enjoyable, especially when compared with another ocean trip, the one on the infamous "Buford," but the anxiety of whether I would be admitted into Canada helped to mar the pleasure. However, the day of my landing arrived, October 16, when the steamer came into Montreal Harbour and a few friends, Baron Bernstein, and Lena Shlakman, came to meet and greet me. But no sooner did it become known that Emma Goldman had come to disturb the complacency of the law-abiding Canadians than the protectors of "law and order" began to deliberate whether or no she should be allowed to remain. In the end, the Canadian authorities showed more sense than the American. They realised that every unpopular cause is advanced more by persecution than by indifference, and I was allowed to remain.

Montreal is essentially a French city; 75 per cent. of the million population are French, body and soul, under the dominion of the Catholic Church. I was told that during the War Montreal and all of the Quebec province were the freest places on the American continent, where one could speak against the War all one liked, because the French Canadians were not interested in the English, and as they hate France for her Liberalism, they were also indifferent to the cause of France. Anyway, Montreal is French Catholic, and as far removed from the cultural efforts and life of the English-speaking part of the city as if they lived thousands of miles away. In fact, Montreal is French in language, tradition, and habits. One could therefore not hope to draw from that part of the city for English lectures or affairs.

Another very important drawback is that there are no Anarchists among the Canadians, and even the few Jewish comrades are unorganised. The English lectures, of which there were only two, were arranged by a very broad-minded and spirited Scotchman at the head of the Open Forum, Mr. Wm. Fraser. This good friend meant well enough and worked hard to make the first lecture in His Majesty's Theatre a great success. But he over-estimated the interest of the English-speaking section of Montreal. At any rate, the meeting left Mr. Fraser and his friends with a considerable deficit. Yet the effort was well worth while, for the reports

of the lecture the next day in the Montreal papers were accurate and dignified, and as they were read by a hundred thousand people, we were able to reach masses which no hall could possibly hold.

The second English lecture was handicapped by a down-pour, and just about covered expenses. Thereupon the Jewish comrades decided to concentrate on Jewish audiences. But here, too, there were a number of factors not considered by our comrades. First, there was the great Chauvinistic feeling which many Jews in Montreal suffer from. Their Jewish pride was hurt because E. G. went first to the "Gom" (Christian) and the "Four Hundred." That a theatre should be considered an exclusive place attended only by the "Four Hundred," or that people could be hurt because any one who has spent 35 years on the English-speaking platform has her first lecture in English, is so utterly absurd that no one with sense would think of such notions as having any effect on people. But it did, and it kept many of the Jews away from the lectures.

Then there are the Communists, who did their utmost to hinder the work of the Montreal comrades. For some inexplicable reason they failed to raise "rough house" at the meetings. Those who attended my lectures were well-behaved, and a few asked intelligent questions. The rest in their great courage stayed away, and made a house-to-house canvass to poison the minds of the people with the most fantastic stories about E. G. It is the usual method to silence opponents adopted from time immemorial—calumny, lies, misrepresentation. The methods used by the Allies against the Germans and vice versa; the vile stories used against the Bolsheviks themselves when they began their activities in Russia. And now the followers of Moscow, incapable of any new thought or original idea, use the same methods against every one who will not swim in their muddy waters. That people should be influenced by such sensational stories merely goes to prove that very few think for themselves.

But in spite of all the drawbacks, difficulties and opposition, the few comrades in Montreal succeeded in holding seven Jewish lectures within three weeks; and if the audiences were not great in quantity, they made up by their quality, sincerity, and earnestness. This was proven best by the response we had at the social evening arranged for me for Sunday, November 21, where I spoke on the conditions of the Political Prisoners in Russia. Only forty people attended the simple banquet, yet \$307 were collected for the unfortunate victims in Russian prisons and exile, an extraordinary thing when one bears in mind the intense work done by the Montreal Communists to blacken every Russian Political in the eyes of the Jews in Montreal. Out of the banquet grew an organization in aid of the Political Prisoners in Russia, a group of men and women who from now on will do systematic work to help the cruel lot of the thousands and thousands in Soviet prisons for opinion's sake.

Bearing in mind all the obstacles in the way of the Montreal comrades, their fine efforts for the success of my lectures deserve no end of credit. Comrades Baron, Bernstein, Zahler, Shlakman, and a few others spared no time or money to make my visit pleasant and the meetings worth while. For this and other reasons it was hard to leave the comrades, but we have made a beginning which will pave the way for my return before I sail for Europe. I said good-bye on November 26, and went further on my quest, to Toronto. Here I intend to remain until the end of the year, to lecture, visit with our comrades, and greet those of my American friends who will have the time and the means to come to me, since it is reasonably certain that I will not be able to come to them.

Before closing, I do not wish to forget the beautiful Debs Memorial Meeting which was arranged by the Socialists of Montreal, and attended by a large and earnest audience, which it was my great privilege to address. This gathering was the more remarkable because the Communists the Sunday previous, partly to interfere with our meeting in the Theatre and partly for their own propaganda purposes, used the dead Eugene Debs, whom in life they ridiculed and spurned.

EMMA GOLDMAN.

Toronto, November 29, 1926.

P.S.—The subjects discussed were "The Present Crisis in Russia," "The Russian Theatre before and since the Revolution," "Trends in Modern Education," "Is the Spirit of Destruction also the Spirit of Construction?" Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorki, and Andreyev.

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Russian Politicals' Appeal.

Letter of the politicals of the Kharkov Prison No. 1, originally addressed to the Central Executive of All-Ukrainian Soviets.

On the occasion of the recent visits to Russia by various European Labour delegations, the official Soviet press has repeatedly asserted that the Government "offers every possible opportunity to investigate, freely and unhindered, life and conditions in Russia." We emphatically protest against this lie and against the infamous misrepresentation and falsification of the prison situation by the organs of the Tcheka. Are you aware that on the night of August 14-15, on the eve of the visit of two German Labour delegations to our prison (the Central Prison of Kharkov), the imprisoned Socialists and Anarchists were subjected to a terrible outrage? At nine in the evening there appeared in our prison Krajni, the General Public Prosecutor, who is the supreme authority of the entire Tcheka (G.P.U.) of the Ukraine. He was accompanied by the Chief of the G.P.U., the Governor of the prison, and a large body of keepers. At the order of the Prosecutor the keepers attacked the political prisoners, because the latter refused to follow them to the G.P.U. They knew that it was intended to hide them in the G.P.U. dungeons, so that the expected delegations should not find them in the Kharkov prison. They protested against such a disgraceful and brutal procedure, as well as against the attempt to deceive the delegates. Are you aware that for this the prisoners were insulted, beaten, threatened with revolvers, and kicked into submission? The politicals, finally finding themselves in the G.P.U. prison, declared a hunger strike, in protest against the official outrage. Following this, the Labour Youth Delegation of Holland visited the Kharkov prison, and when they inquired whether there were any politicals there, the Prison Governor replied emphatically: "There are no political prisoners here."

Similar "information" also received the American student delegation, when they visited the Kharkov prison, some time before the Holland delegates. Again, when the German working women delegation visited the prison, on September 14, the politicals were taken into the prison yard for a walk, so that the delegates could not see them. When, however, the prisoners learned of the presence of the delegation, they demanded an interview with the latter. The prison authorities assured them that it was not a foreign delegation that was visiting the prison. "It is merely an excursion of Communist women from the German colonies of the U.S.S.R.," the Governor asserted. He promised to bring the visitors to the political wing of the prison, but of course he did not keep his promise. As we later learned from the papers, the delegation was really that of the Labour Unions of Germany.

These are the means used by the authorities to "inform" visiting delegates about conditions in Russia! And that in spite of the solemn promise given us by Chief Prosecutor Krajni that he would permit visiting Labour delegations to see the politicals, even in their cells. But of course Krajni, as well as the prison authorities, know very well that if the delegates were permitted to see us they would easily convince themselves that revolutionary Socialists are kept in prison, that they are doomed by administrative process (without trial) to long years of imprisonment and exile in out-of-the-way places, that the Tcheka tries to compel them to sign statements for the press announcing their resignation from the parties of opposition, and that the politicals are persecuted for refusing to comply with such demands.

We protest most emphatically against this vile deceit practised upon the delegates from foreign countries! We denounce the arbitrary and brutal treatment of the political prisoners!

We consider it our social and political duty to call to this the attention of the Presidium of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive of the Soviets. In the hearing of the workers of the world we demand to know: do you approve of these barbaric methods to demonstrate to the Labour delegations of Western Europe "the success of Socialistic constructiveness"? Do you sanction these means, or will you admit that they are the methods of despicable climbers of the G.P.U. and of zealous prison keepers? Yes or No?

September 15, 1926.

Signed by 17 politicals, among them 7 Anarchists,
1 Left Social-Revolutionist, 5 Zionist-Socialists,
and 4 members of the Socialist Youth.

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The Reign of Mush.

The New Year brought a letter from the King, in which he gave it as his belief that, with united efforts and a spirit of mutual confidence and goodwill, there would come a restoration of trade. It also brought announcement of the creation of four new peers, and seven new baronets, together with the bestowal of numerous knighthoods and lesser so-called "honours," most of which were for political services. In other words, the Ruling Raj had strengthened itself by the absorption of certain individuals who had been useful to the party in power.

On the day following the publication of the King's letter we had one of Mr. Baldwin's customary homilies, in which we were admonished that "we must all work together with a view to the restoration of trade and national prosperity." Simultaneously Mr. Ramsay MacDonald broke into print in the *Socialist Review* with the declaration that he was an "unregenerate apostle of industrial peace"; and Mr. J. R. Clynes felt it incumbent on him to advise rich Socialists to stick to their money—that is to say, to continue living on what they do not earn. This piece of gratuitous advice would seem, however, to have been a trifle superfluous, no one having observed as yet any tendency on the part of rich British Socialists to beggar themselves by financing a struggling cause. Foreign Socialists and Anarchists without number, of course, have been guilty of that particular kind of imprudent heroism, but we are a practical, business people, and with us investments are investments.

Within a day or two of these pronouncements we had Mr. J. H. Thomas assuring a great railway potentate that his Union recognised "the tremendous blow they had struck at the railway companies" by the General Strike, and declaring that "there was a genuine desire to make reparation as far as they could." Having pondered over which, I glanced at an adjoining column of the paper and saw the heading, "More Unemployment," accompanied by the following statement: "The total number of persons on the register of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain on December 24 was 1,351,000. This was 41,261 more than the previous week. The total of 1,351,000 is exclusive of persons in the coal mining industry who at the date of the return remained disqualified for unemployment benefit under the trade dispute disqualifications."

My own humble opinion is that this last item in itself makes a mockery of talk about industrial peace, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald seems to me either an incurable visionary who cannot recognise a fact when it hits him directly between the eyes, or an unspeakable humbug. As for Mr. Clynes, I find the opinion general that in the modern British Labour movement nothing is done for nothing, and that the adhesion of plutocrats is welcomed because it confers a halo of respectability which may quiet the alarms of the proverbially timid middle class. Mr. Thomas I regard as trying to scramble out of the hole into which the cowardice of Trade Union leaders got him, it being now clear that these gentlemen loathed the very idea of a General Strike, but had not the pluck to risk their popularity by opposing it. Fine champions of the trusting, the all too-trusting, British workers, who, when they threw his hat into the ring, believed they really wanted him to fight!

In *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* of January 1, I find the place of honour given to a long article by Mr. G. D. H. Cole, headed "1926-1927: The Task Before Us," in which he warns his fellow Socialists not to "rely too much on the assurance of our political triumph," says that the General Strike was "mucked and muddled," and indulges in the following disheartening reflections: "The fault lies deep down in our movement itself. For, as a movement, we have no plan, no policy,

no common cause plain before our eyes. We drift hither and thither, and each man or little group tries, in a muddled way, to think things out. But, in the general confusion, no man can hope to act aright." After which he remarks that, "above all else, our movement needs more, and more courageous, thinking"; and adds: "We fight over unreal issues, and, therefore, fail to face the real issues that are staring us in the face." Well, that is just about what FREEDOM has been saying persistently, year after year.

It is instructive to turn to the *New Leader*, official organ of the Independent Labour Party. Its new editor reviews the movements of revolution and counter-revolution now convulsing Europe; the challenge to white domination of the coloured races issued by China; the revolt of Mexico, Central and South America, against the economic imperialism of the United States; and out of all this chaos he sees arising the beginnings of organisation and order. These beginnings he discovers in the colossal capitalist amalgamations that were so distinctive a feature of last year; and to those who understand the Socialist way of looking at things it is needless to say that he regards such combinations with the utmost complacency. "Capitalism," he declares, "is steadily creating its world economic organisation," and he opines that "the organisation which we require is actually being created by our opponents." They are killing competition, is his argument, and we should rejoice over the rapidity with which the big fish are gobbling up the smaller fry, and hail the super-multi-millionaire as the true saviour of the race. Similarly, of course, we should gloat over the spectacle of the United States swallowing the Western hemisphere; and if the British Empire can do the same with Asia and Africa, let her go to it, with the blessing of the Independent Labour Party. Thus, according to *New Leader* doctrine, competition will be eliminated, and it will become possible for Socialism to take over the administration of this planet as a properly-organised and businesslike concern.

What dreams are these! What nightmares due to overstuffings of political ambitions! What an appalling blindness to Life's realities! Is it conceivable that these smaller nations, now waking to a consciousness of their own individuality, will gracefully submit to being gizzled, as one guzzles an oyster? Is it to be imagined that the world's workers will place their necks submissively under the heel of a small ring of plutocrats, because, forsooth, these plunderers are bringing order out of chaos, and smoothing the way for Socialism? Yet this is the doctrine with which our Socialist pundits are drugging the revolting masses, and this is what Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is ladling out when he declares himself the "unregenerate apostle of industrial peace." This is the thought at the back of Mr. Clynes's tender anxiety for the rich Socialist; and when Mr. Thomas prostrates himself before the representative of the Great Western Railway Company, it means that he looks on Plutocracy as at once desirable and invincible.

The plain truth is that the position of our masses is desperate, and precisely because they have been bamboozled into calling this country their own, although they do not own so much as an inch of it. In an ever-increasing proportion they are becoming superfluous. They are not wanted, and one of our rulers' great problems to-day is—"How shall we get rid of them?" In such circumstances all talk of industrial peace is mush, and poisoned mush; for it drugs the sufferer into torpidity when his very life depends on his bestirring and asserting himself. In his present leaders there is no hope, and ultimately he will be forced to the discovery that his only hope is in himself. His trouble is that he is barred from the things that are necessary to his very existence, and those bars will have to be pulled down. That is the workers' own personal task; but the Socialist doctrine is that no country can emancipate itself, and that until all the world has been organised, no permanent relief for the working class is possible.

Of all possible teachings that seems to me the mushiest, the most unreal, the least in touch with the actualities of life. It postpones emancipation indefinitely, and so long as the workers continue to be deluded by it, they will have to stew in their own juice.

W. C. O.

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FREEDOM PRESS, 127, Ossulston Street, London, N.W.1.

A Fighter of Forlorn Hopes.

The exuberant enthusiasm, the keenness, and the happy hope that permeated the Socialist movement in England during the '80's has dwindled and been lost amid a welter of self-seeking factions. Forty-five years ago Socialism was a word to conjure with; to-day it is merely a synonym for political job-hunting. The fragile plant of Revolutionary Socialism so carefully nurtured in those far-away days has been smothered by the enormous growth of a noxious weed. A weed which has brazenly assumed the name of the rarer plant, but is as different in root and foliage as is bindweed to a rose.

To be a Revolutionary Socialist in 1881-89 meant being a pioneer, and the lot of the pioneer in ideas is notoriously a hard one. It is, mayhap, because of this, and also because the Socialism preached in those days was of so clear-cut and vigorous a nature, that one is apt to regard these dead and gone pioneers as veritable giants. Certain it is that these men and women were not of the common rut. Socialism in those days was not the fourth career open to the younger sons of the middle class, and to espouse the cause then meant the possession of physical as well as moral courage.

Max Nettlau in the October issue of FREEDOM mentions two of these pioneers—Joe Lane and Sam Mainwaring—and a history of the latter's gradual progress in ideas is synonymous with a history of the early days of the Socialist movement in this country.

Born at Neath in South Wales, December 14, 1848, and reared in a strictly Nonconformist atmosphere, he while a youth was strongly drawn toward the Unitarian denomination, evincing thus early in life a predilection for the advanced section of any cause in which he was interested. Having learned his trade as an engineer, there followed a brief number of years in the United States, succeeded by a still briefer period of sea-going, which ended by leaving his ship and settling ashore in South-East London in 1875. By this time his Unitarian sympathies appear to have disappeared, for in 1876 or 1877 he was a member of the East London Radical Clubs Association, and was also greatly taken up with "Saladin" and the writers of the *Eclectic Review*, but, most important of all, he joined the East London Labour Emancipation League, his first decisive step in the revolutionary movement.

During his short stay in the United States he had been a member of the American Knights of Labour, and on returning to this country he rejoined his old Union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and remained a member until the day of his death. He retained an active interest and belief in the Trade Union movement all his life, but he was a very keen and unsparing critic of his own Union's policy and administration. It was in Union affairs that his strong anti-authoritarian bias had first expression. Elected in the early '80's to sit upon the voluntary executive of the Engineers, he refused the post, passing it on to another member who had no such prejudices.

Keenly alive to the importance of the Trade Union movement, he had other and wider interests, one of which was working-class education; and doubtless feeling acutely his own limitations he found time during the winters of 1878 and 1879 to attend Professor Bouar's classes in Political Economy at the London University. The knowledge thus acquired did not perhaps have the result desired by the good Professor, because instead of making the pupil into a good Liberal it seemed to strengthen and clarify his unorthodox views respecting Government and legalised authority. These views, however, had not yet taken definite shape, because when Stone and his companions started the Social Democratic Federation in 1881 Sam Mainwaring was one of the first to join. Yet even now he was not satisfied, and the insistent urge created by his logical mind drove him in December, 1884, in common with some twenty others, to break away and form the Socialist League.

The causes of this split have been often debated, but one thing is certain: the S.D.F. believed in Parliamentary action; the men who formed the League did not. This is not to say that all of them were definitely anti-Parliamentary, but some were, and Mainwaring threw in his lot with them. As a matter of fact, the Manifesto of the League has but a scant reference to political action—"As to mere politics, Absolutism, Constitutionalism, Republicanism, have all been tried in our day, and under our present social system, and all have alike failed in dealing with the real evils of life."

Scant as is the reference, the inference is plain and unmistakable; but when the *Commonweal* was started in the following year the viewpoint was stated more explicitly, and, strange to say, by one around whom this controversy has ranged most fiercely—William Morris. In a leading article on "Socialism and Politics" in No. 6 of the *Commonweal*, Morris wrote: "I think that Socialists ought not to hesitate to choose between Parliamentarism and revolutionary agitation, and that it is a mistake to try and sit on the two stools at once; and, for my part, I hope that they will declare against Parliamentarism, as I feel assured that otherwise they will have to retrace their steps at the cost of much waste of time and discouragement."

That is definite enough, and coupled with an article couched in similar terms by Joseph Lane in an earlier number of the paper, proves that the majority of the Socialist League were definitely anti-Parliamentary; therefore, it is small wonder to find Sam Mainwaring throwing himself wholeheartedly into the work of the League during the following five or six years.

This small body of men can rightly claim to be the pioneers of revolutionary thought in this country. They were the first to bring Socialism into the ken of the working man, reducing it from mere theory and translating it into the language of the man in the street; and although the League was not a Marxist body (indeed some were opposed to Marxism from the beginning) yet they opened the first classes in Marxian economics held in this country. These years were packed with strenuous work, and during this period Mainwaring became a proficient and forceful outdoor speaker. Right through the '80's the free speech fight was waged with varying intensity at Dod Street, Stratford, Edgware Road, and many other places. He had his first experience of Capitalist Justice in July, 1886, when he was fined £20 for holding a meeting at the corner of Bell Street in the Edgware Road. With him were Morris and Jack Williams, of the S.D.F. The following year, with Frank Kitz as companion, he carried the message into his native South Wales, addressing the wondering crowds in their own language at Pontypridd, Merthyr, and Aberdare. It is a strange commentary on the progress of ideas that South Wales, now a stronghold of Marxism, should have had the first lessons in revolutionary Socialism from two such staunch Anarchist Communists as Kitz and Mainwaring.

The year 1890 saw the end of this phase of his life. The League had fallen apart, and many of its most active workers—that is, those who were in close contact with the toilers—had travelled the logical road, and were now actively associated with the Anarchists, and the *Commonweal* under Charles Mowbray and later on David Nicoll was a straightforward Anarchist Communist publication. At the end of this year economic pressure and police persecution had driven Sam Mainwaring from London, and for the next two years Swansea was the scene of his manifold activities.

W. M.

(To be concluded.)

THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926.*

These two books are an attempt to put on permanent record the principal facts relating to the General Strike of May, 1926. The book prepared by Mr. Page Arnot is by far the most interesting of the two. It is divided into two parts—"The Nine Months," that is the nine months from August, 1925, to May 1, 1926, which may be called the preparatory period; and "The Nine Days," the days the General Strike was in being. Of course, it was not a "general strike" in reality, as millions of workers were not called out at all; but it will go down in the history of the British Labour Movement as the General Strike of 1926.

The nine months preceding May, 1926, were a period of intense preparation on the part of the Government and the mineowners, but the General Council of the Trades Union Congress were animated by the feeling that they must not make any preparations for a strike, as that would be regarded as a threat by the Government. Therefore it can be said that they never made any preparations and never dreamt of any plans till the very last moment.

The General Council were also of the opinion that, whilst recognising the low standard of living to which the miners

* "The General Strike, May, 1926: Its Origin and History." Prepared by R. Page Arnot. "The General Strike, May, 1926, Trade Councils in Action." Prepared by Eddie Burns. Price of each: Cloth, 3s. 6d.; paper, 2s. London: Labour Research Department, 102, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.

had been reduced, which they stated publicly over and over again must not be further degraded, the industry was in such a sad economic condition that pending reorganisation the miners must make sacrifices. This two-faced way of looking at the problem was the cause of all the subsequent trouble. This indefiniteness cannot be charged against the officials of the Miners' Federation. They said, "Not a penny off, not a minute on," and meant it. The General Council said one thing to Trade Union Conferences, another thing to the miners, and a third to the Government. When an army is led by men who do not know their own minds failure is certain.

Mr. Page Arnot has fully documented his book, and has had access to papers not accessible to the general reader, and all those who wish to have a record of these momentous events must buy this book. It is written from the Left Wing point of view, which adds to the piquancy of the story.

The other book, "Trades Councils in Action," is a record of the activities of Trades Councils during the strike, particulars of which were given in answer to a questionnaire sent out by the Labour Research Department. When the General Strike broke out many of the Trades Councils were Councils only in name—very little organisation, no premises of their own, and hampered by the indecision of the General Council. But some of them achieved wonders in a few days and were just getting into their stride when the strike collapsed. They found there was a lot of red tape in the Labour Movement, but they cut some and ignored more. Publicity was absolutely necessary to counteract the lies of the *British Gazette* and the broadcasting, but the Printers' Unions refused to allow their members to print strike bulletins until they got permission from headquarters. In spite of all obstacles, the enthusiasm and energy spontaneously brought to light showed what might be achieved some day when the issue is not miners' wages but the abolition of the wage system. Some of the Trades Councils report that the men were greatly disheartened by the pitiable ending of the strike. "The men returned to work humiliated, and they felt they had been deceived." Well, the "inquest" on the strike is to be held in a few days; the leaders who deceived them will then brazen it out as they always do. They drive the machine, and their critics are almost powerless to force the wheel out of their hands. The cult of leadership is the undoing of the rank and file.

"Trades Councils in Action" shows the possibilities of spontaneous action when freed from the necessity of consulting "headquarters." Both books were worth doing and have been done well.

The very name of a politician and statesman is sure to cause terror and hatred; it has always connected with it the ideas of treachery, cruelty, fraud, and tyranny; and those writers who have faithfully unveiled the mysteries of State-freemasonry have ever been held in general detestation for even knowing so perfectly a theory so detestable.—BURKE.

Force of arms, or the stake and faggot, may be the means the foe of freedom and true progress would employ in one age; in another he may clothe his attempts under the forms of Law or the disguise of Acts of Parliament. The spirit remains the same and the test unerring.—J. TOULMIN SMITH.

"FREEDOM'S" BIRTHDAY FUND.

We are still a long way from the £100 we asked for. Subscribers at home seem to have exhausted their financial resources, so now we are looking to "the New World to redress the balance of the Old," to use Burke's famous phrase. The Land of the Dollar can surely do more than it has done up to the present.

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